



# **CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION PUBLIC FORUM**


May 1, 2017

7:00 PM

Town Hall


# Charter Revision History

- ❖ Current Charter adopted in November 2006.
- ❖ Charter Review was initiated by BOS in September 2014 and completed in September 2015.
- ❖ Charter Revision Commission appointed March 2016.
- ❖ Draft Revision to be submitted to BOS in the next 30-45 days
  - Public input and comments to be gathered.
  - Public information sessions to be held in July/August.
- ❖ Amended charter to be sent to vote November 2017.
  - Commission is targeting six questions on the ballot.



# Question: Should the Tax Collector be appointed?

- Currently elected to a four year term.
- There are no qualifications to run for office other than being a resident of the Town of Colchester.
- Would serve at the pleasure of the Board of Selectman like other department heads.
- Allows defined qualifications and experience necessary for position.
  - ❖ Town currently funds certification for employees that may not get re-elected.
- Expanded pool of candidates beyond Colchester.
- Eliminates distractions associated with re-election.



# Question: Should the Town Clerk be appointed?

- Currently elected to a four year term.
- There are no qualifications to run for office other than being a resident of the Town of Colchester.
- Would serve at the pleasure of the Board of Selectman like other department heads.
- Allows defined qualifications and experience necessary for position.
  - ❖ Town currently funds certification for employees that may not get re-elected.
- Expanded pool of candidates beyond Colchester.
- Eliminates distractions associated with re-election.



## **Question: Should the Treasurer position be eliminated?**

- Currently elected to a two year term, there are no qualifications to run for office other than being a resident of the Town of Colchester.
- Main duties include reviewing check registers, transferring money between bank accounts, and handling investments.
- These duties would be assumed by the CFO Department resulting in a savings of \$4,500 per year to the Town.
- Additional checks and balances would be provided through the annual audit process and oversight provided by other elected officials.

# Question: Should all elected positions be four year terms?

- There is inconsistency in the terms of elected officials:
  - Proposal would move all elected positions to a four year term.
  - This would increase the term for the Board of Selectman and Board of Assessment and Appeals from two years to four years and decrease the term of the Board of Finance from six years to four years.
- Rationale:
  - Two years is a short time period for a new member of the BOS or BAA to get up to speed and become familiar with their responsibilities before it's time for re-election.
  - The Board of Finance term of six years is a long time and there have been few members to make it the entire six years.
    - Four years seems like a more reasonable time in the position and most Boards of Finance in towns with a Charter serve a four year term.





## Question: Technical Modifications

- These updates are meant to streamline and organize the document in a way that increases its effectiveness.
- One example is to update the list of Town Departments in a manner that is consistent with current practice. At the same time, the description of the functions of each Department have been removed because they are constantly changing and do not reflect what is currently in the Charter. The Town would be better served to include the functions in an operations manual.
- Another example is adding definitions to clarify what is currently included in the Combined Budget, Board of Selectman Budget and Board of Education Budget.



# Question: Streamlining Budget Process

- Reorganization to minimize confusion
- Recounts on budget vote consistent with statutes
- Updated dollar amounts to reflect current spending (ex. real estate)
- Lower thresholds to reconvene annual budget meeting
- Closed loopholes on borrowing
  - All borrowing agreements above threshold go to Town Meeting
- Transfer Process
  - Added emergency contingency for public safety
  - BOS and BOF approve transfers between adopted town dept. budgets
- Supplemental Appropriations process
  - Added emergency contingency for public safety
  - Removed redundant requirements
  - Town meeting or referendum required for appropriations above 2.0%